



Governor Brian Schweitzer

Montana **Department of Labor and Industry** **Business Standards Division**

MONTANA BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

POLICY STATEMENT CONCERNING THE PHYSICIAN-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

The Montana Board of Medical Examiners recognizes that the relationship between a physician and a patient is fundamental and is not to be constrained or adversely affected by any considerations other than what is best for the patient. As the delivery of health care changes, the duty of the physician to patient does not, and financial or contractual concerns must always be secondary to the fundamental relationship. It is the Board's position that it is unethical for a physician to allow financial or contractual incentives to affect his or her medical judgment or patient care.

The relationship between a physician and patient is based on trust which requires that there be:

- open respectful and honest communication between the physician and patient, including disclosure of all information necessary for the patient or the patient's guardian to be informed about his or her care;
- provision of care which is necessary and appropriate for the condition of the patient;
- commitment of the physician to be an advocate for the patient and to do what is best for the patient;
- no conflict of interest or inappropriate relationships between the patient and the physician or third parties
- compassion and respect for the patient

The Board believes that the health of the people of Montana is best protected when the physician-patient relationship remains inviolate. Sometimes communication errors give an appearance of a violation that is unintended by either the provider or the patient. Any act or failure by a physician that violates this relationship may place the physician at risk of being found in violation of the Medical Practice Act.

Adopted: May 16, 2003